



Montgomery County Council

For Immediate Release

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Councilmember Valerie Ervin to be Opening Speaker at Coalition for Juvenile Justice Annual Conference in Bethesda

*4-Day Conference That Starts Friday, June 22, Will Focus
on Innovative Programs to Help Youth, Families*

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ROCKVILLE, Md., June 21, 2012—Montgomery County Councilmember Valerie Ervin on Friday, June 22, will give opening remarks at the four-day Coalition of Juvenile Justice State Advisory Groups' annual national conference at the Hyatt Regency Hotel in Bethesda. The focus of this year's conference will be on innovative programs that have improved relationships between youth, their families and government agencies.

The conference includes seminars on promoting evidence-informed policies and practices in delinquency reduction and prevention; educating the public and advising government; instituting juvenile justice system reforms; and linking national, state and local advocates and organizations together, across many disciplines and circumstances to pursue a common mission.

Councilmember Ervin chairs the Montgomery Council's Education Committee. In her remarks, she will offer her view of juvenile justice issues through a different lens. She will talk about programs that she has strongly supported to help children at young ages so that they do not get involved in the juvenile justice system as they reach at-risk age.

"My focus is on early childhood education and early interventions to keep our children on the path to educational achievement and out of the juvenile justice system," said Councilmember Ervin. "We know that high-quality, pre-kindergarten programs, child care subsidies and early interventions like truancy court help our students achieve success."

Ervin's comments will also focus on access to high-quality food for children at school and in the community. Low income children are at the greatest risk of food insecurity and a lack of high nutritional content in the meals. All of these issues can impact student achievement.

Councilmember Ervin will discuss programs in the County that she has spearheaded in partnership with outside agencies and stakeholders including: a holistic, full-day, pre-kindergarten program with wrap around services; the Kennedy cluster program that is aimed at closing the achievement gap; and the truancy court program that is a therapeutic and non-punitive approach that gets to the root causes of why students are absent from school from five to 20 days per year.

She will also discuss how Montgomery County leaders are having to back-fill the cuts made at the federal and state levels to invest in their youth. For example, this year, Councilmember Ervin advocated to add \$800,000 to the County's operating budget because of state budget cuts. The Council approved this amount, which will virtually eliminate the waiting list for families in desperate need of child care subsidies.

"The County is having to consistently step up to the plate to preserve essential services for our children and working families," said Councilmember Ervin. "All of these actions are essential to ensuring that we sustain high graduation rates, protect the health and welfare of our children and put them on the path to success."

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